

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed December 12, 2005 (hereinafter "Office Action"). The original period for response is a shortened statutory period of three months from the mailing date of the Office Action, making this Reply due on March 12, 2006. Accordingly, this Reply is timely filed.

In the Office Action, the Examiner allowed claims 1-11 and 22-28. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of these claims.

The Examiner rejected claims 12 and 17. Claim 17 has now been canceled.

Regarding claim 12, this claim has been combined with claim 13, which depended upon claim 12. In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 13 was objected to, but would be allowable if combined with the limitations of claim 12.

Thus, claim 12 as now amended, i.e., with the limitations of claim 13, is now allowable.

Claims 13-16, 18-21, 29 and 30 were objected to, but were indicated as being allowable, "if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims."

As indicated above, claim 13 has been canceled. The limitations of claim 13 have now been combined with claim 12. Claim 12 is thus now allowable.

Claims 14-16 and 18-21 are all directly or indirectly dependent upon now allowable claim 12. Thus, the basis for the objection to these claims is now overcome, and claims 14-16 and 18-21 are also now allowable.

Finally, claims 29 and 30 were objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims. See page 3 of the Office Action.

The Applicants submit that claim 29 depends on currently allowed claim 1, and thus claim 29 need not be amended. Claim 29 is allowable, as written.

Claim 30 depends upon claim 12, which with the amendments described above, is now allowable.


Application No. 10/743,993
Reply to Office Action of December 12, 2005
Page 8

CONCLUSION

For all of the above reasons, claims 1-16 and 18-30 are allowable. The only remaining claim, claim 17, has been canceled. Thus, Applicants request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance.

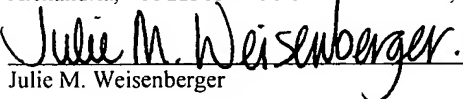
Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 19, 2005

By: 
Daniel N. Christus, Registration No. 29,626
Customer No. 23424
Wallenstein Wagner & Rockey, Ltd.
311 South Wacker Drive, 53rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6630
312-554-3300
Attorneys for Applicants

CERTIFICATE UNDER (37 C.F.R. § 1.8a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is, on the date shown below, being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on December 19, 2005.


Julie M. Weisenberger